

The Duty of setting our Affection on Things above.

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S E R M O N

Preach'd in the Parish Church of

L O N G C L A W S O N,

I N T H E

County of LEICESTER, May 27, 1737.

A T T H E

F U N E R A L

O F

M A R T, Late Wife of the Reverend
Mr. WILLIAM TURVILE, Vicar of the said
Parish.

By **CHRISTOPHER CLARKSON, D.D.**
Rector of Stathern in Leicestershire, and late Fellow of
St. Peter's College, Cambridge.

*Publisch'd at the Request of her RELATIONS, and Others
of the Audience.*

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COLOSS. III. 1, 2, 3.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Set your Affections on things above, not on things on the Earth. For ye are dead, and your Life is hid with Christ in God.

THESSE Words have a manifest Relation to something going before, and from which they seem to be an Inference: The Passage to which they refer, I take to be the twelfth Verse of the foregoing Chapter; *Buried with him in Baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the Faith of the Operation of God, who hath raised him from the Dead.* From which the Apostle infers, (whatever intervenes being to be looked upon as a Parenthesis) *If ye then be risen with Christ.*

FOR the better understanding of which Words, it may be necessary to observe, that there is in them a plain Allusion to the antient Manner of baptizing, which was by *Immersion*, or having the whole Body put under Water: *The Descent into*

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which was looked upon by the first Christians to be a *Figure of Death*: The *Continuance* in, and as it were *Concealment* of the Body under it, as a *Representation of Burial*: And the *Ascension* out of it, as a kind of *Image or Similitude* of the *Resurrection*. So that every Person thus baptized, was, by the very Form and Intention of his Baptism, thought to be *dead* to Sin, *buried*, and *risen* again, as it were, out of the *Grave* of his former *Corruptions*. And it seems but a natural Consequence and Continuation of the Metaphor, on Supposition he was *risen* with *Christ*, that he ought also to *ascend* with him. The Meaning therefore of the Words before us is in short, this: "Ye, ye Christians, being in and by your very Baptism, and the typical Signification of it, dead and risen again, your true Life from henceforth is that holy and heavenly Life, which, tho' at present invisible, ye shall live with Christ in the Presence of God; and if so, ye ought, from the very Moment of your Baptism, to set your Affection on Things above; to use your utmost Endeavours to lead this new kind of Life, which Christ has purchased, and taken Possession of for you; and no more to live to sin now, than ye will then." Ye must rise with him to *good Works here*, if ye expect or hope to rise to *Glory* with him hereafter.

THIS may be sufficient to shew the Nature and Connection of the Apostle's Reasoning in these Verses. The general Truth, or Point of Instruction contained in them, is plainly this: That the Resurrection, here alluded to, is of a moral Nature,

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ture, a Resurrection in this World, viz. from a *Death of Sin* unto a *Life of Righteousness*: That every Person, who is by Baptism admitted into the Christian Religion, then enters upon a new and heavenly State of Life: Engages and undertakes, by the Grace of God, to wean and withdraw his Affections from *Things on Earth*, and to set and fix them *on Things above*. To have his *Conversation in Heaven*.

MY Design, from the Text, is to strike in with this mournful Occasion, to take the Advantage of that Seriousness and Attention, which such sad Solemnities naturally inspire, and of that blessed Example this in particular furnishes us with, in order the more effectually to persuade us to this Duty; by shewing what powerful Reasons and Inducements we Christians have to set our Hearts and Affections *on Things above*, and *not on Things on the Earth*.

AND the Apostle's Argument in these Words being taken from hence, that we being in Baptism figuratively *dead, buried, and risen* again; our true Life is that spiritual and celestial Life, which (tho' concealed from mortal Sight) we shall live with Christ hereafter; attended with a Caution not to let Things on Earth, Things pleasant and powerful, because present and grateful to Sense, tempt us to neglect this divine Life, by drawing our Affections towards them: I think I can no way do greater Justice to this Argument, or set it in a fuller and stronger Light, than by placing the Things belonging to this present State, and the Things of the next, (so far as we know them, and the

the Time will permit) in the same View: So that by a joint Comparison of them, we may see how vastly they differ from each other! how mean and trifling, vain and insignificant, transitory and fading every Thing in this World is, when compared with the Glories of the other: and what a mighty Folly (not to say Madness) it is in us, to suffer the poor and perishing Pleasures arising from Things on Earth, to steal our Hearts and Affections from the more solid and durable Joys of Heaven!

AND the better to do this, I shall take the Liberty to invert the Apostle's Order, and the more successfully to prevail with us to set our Affections on Things above, I shall shew in the first Place, that there is nothing here below capable of making us happy, and on that Account nothing here worthy of our Affection.

INDEED to illustrate this Truth as it deserves would require a Volume: But it may in some Measure appear from a transient View, a short Induction, of a few Particulars.—If *Riches* be the Idol

Job xxxi. 24. of our Imaginations, and we *make Gold our Hope, and say to fine Gold thou art my Confidence*, and seem to think there is no Satisfaction or Security

Luke xii. 19, 20. like that of the rich Fool in the Gospel, *who laid up Goods for himself for many years*: yet there is generally so much Trouble in getting, so much Care in keeping, so much Danger of losing, and so many anxious Fears on that Account, that these must vastly abate the Pleasure we propos'd to our selves in the Possession of them. And after all our Sollicitude and Caution, these are such fickle and
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fleeting shadows, that we are not always able to secure them. The Apostle elegantly advises; not to *trust in uncertain Riches*; and the wise King 1 Tim. vi. 17. with a beautiful kind of Wonder and Amazement asks, *Wilt thou set thine Eyes upon that* Prov. xxiii. 5. *which is not? For Riches certainly make themselves Wings, they fly away, as an Eagle towards Heaven.* And what is a yet more unfortunate Circumstance, there is often no other Advantage in a splendid Fortune, than to tempt some to Envy, and others to deprive us of it; and sometimes by striking at our very Lives, to make Way to our Possessions. Or supposing nothing of this Nature to happen, yet Riches are so far from being able to make us happy, that they have to most Tempers a natural Tendency to make us miserable. Though they have no real Excellencies in themselves, and are Things without us, no Perfection, or so much as a Part, of our Natures; yet we are too apt to be proud of these glittering Trifles, and of our selves for their sakes. They fill our Minds with Vanity and Conceit: Hence unreasonable Expectations from others, and as unreasonable Resentments if these are not complied with: Hence the common Accidents of Life are improved into Misfortunes, casual Neglects into Affronts and Injuries, all which naturally tend to make us uneasy. And what is the greatest Unhappiness of all, they are often too successful Temptations to us, not only to over-value our selves, and despise our Neighbour, but to forget God and our Duty; to make us so fond of this World, that we seldom or never think of the other. And even in respect
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of this World, they are frequently Misfortunes to us: The Causes of our losing Health of Body and Tranquility of Mind; neither of which when lost are they able to restore. And at last (for if they leave not us, we must shortly leave them) after having contributed to our infelicity in Life, are of no other Service but to imbitter our Death. Such Considerations as these (and many more Prov. xxx. 8. might be added) drew from wise *Agur* a Prayer against them, and may be sufficient to prevail with us, not to set our Affections on Things so *uncertain*, so *dangerous*, so *fatal* as these.

IF we place, as many have placed^a, our Happiness in *Power*; we shall find, as Thousands have found before us, to our great Disappointment, that it creates many Enemies, and those real and often bitter ones; and but few Friends, and those not rarely false and insincere; Spies upon our Behaviour, and watching all Opportunities of making their own Advantage in our Fall. And indeed these are generally not our Friends, but their own, the Friends and Followers of our Fortune. It may help to put us out of conceit with the Post of high Place and Honour, how fair soever in Idea, to consider with what mighty Difficulty Innocence and Integrity can be maintained in it! How many, in the common Course of the World, must be flattered, and how many deceived! Some, no doubt, to their Ruin. How few can be obliged! How many disappointed, and of Course disgusted! Besides Man's Power is al-

^a *Imbecilla enim Natura est ad contemnendam Potentiam. Cicero.*

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most wholly imaginary; if Dependants or Subjects lose a Sense of Duty, what, or where, is it? It seems at most but a Power by *Courtesy*. And who would place his Happiness, or so much as Safety, in standing on the Point of a Pinnacle! In any Thing attended with so many *Inconveniencies*, so great *Uncertainty*, and *Hazard*! — And even that *Ambition* which is to raise us to it, and put us in Possession of it, being, in the very Nature of it, an Enemy to Rest or Content, is scarce ever to be made easy. It is apter to awake Desires than to satisfy them. As it rises, its Prospect is ever enlarging. The Vanity and Vexation of it is, that it will for ever have some one Point to carry, and consequently be for ever so far short of Felicity. It usually terminates indeed, first or last, in being a Favourite to Day, and in Disgrace we know not why to Morrow.

POPULARITY, or an Itch of vain Admiration and Applause, is still sillier, and consequently farther from yielding any true Satisfaction. Alas! of what Value can the Opinion of the World, *i. e.* of the ignorant and ill-judging, of the trifling and the vain, of the prejudiced and the corrupt, be to any Man, who endeavours to think wisely, or to live well? And what a sad Thing must it be, not to be able to enjoy one's self without the Leave of such! If these Wretches with-hold their Favour (and no sooner shall they perceive that his Happiness is placed in it than they certainly will) he is ruined and undone. And can that be deem'd Felicity, which is so precarious as to depend upon the *Madness of the People*, the Pleasure of a thoughtless

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less and giddy Multitude, almost always in the Wrong, and if by chance in the Right, yet changeable as the Wind or Wave? It is not easy to say whether such a Man as this is justly more *wretched* or *contemptible*. He begs the most worthless Things from the meanest of * Creatures, and yet must of Course become miserable if refused them, and is almost sure of being so.

AS to what are peculiarly called *Pleasures*, let it suffice to observe, that Men of the best and most improved Understandings have in every Age spoke of these with great *Indifference*, if not *Contempt*. Even *Heathen* Writers^b thought they deserv'd not the Name of Pleasure; were below the Dignity of an human Soul; and of all other Follies the most injurious to the Mind. That to grow fond of them was to turn Rivals to the Beasts that perish, and to place our Happiness no higher than theirs; to degrade the *Man* into the *Brute*. They have been compar'd to Flowers, which indeed look sweet and tempting at a Distance, but are no sooner gathered, than they begin to fade and die.

BUT though these should fail of making us happy, there is something yet remaining which promises fairer than they all, and that is *Friendship*. Friendship, which has been justly esteemed a *Cure*, and, as it were, *Charm* for every Calamity; our last Retreat, and best Security against

* Vide, ne plus commendatio in Vulgus, & hæc, quæ expetitur, Gloria molestiæ habeat, quam voluptatis. Leviculus sane noster *Demosthenes*, qui illo susurro delectari se dicebat aquam ferentis mulierculæ, ut mos in Græcia est, insusurrantisque alteri. *Hic est ille Demosthenes*. Quid hoc levius? At quantus Orator? Sed apud alios loqui videlicet didicerat, non multum ipse secum. *Cicero*, *Tuscul. Disput.* V. 56.

^b Plato, *Cicero*, *Seneca*, &c. almost every where.

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the Arrows of Fortune (to use a popular, but improper Way of speaking) and of the World. A famous *Heathen* observed, *That nothing is so suitable or convenient either for Prosperity or Adversity: It rendering the former more splendid and happy, and the latter, by a Participation of it, more easy and tolerable*^c. The Author of *Ecclesiasticus* calls a faithful Friend, still more elegantly, *the Medicine of Life*. He is undoubtedly one of the greatest Blessings which God can bestow on Man, and they, and they only, who fear the Lord shall find him. But yet this Blessing, however great, is at present hard to be met with. The Pretence is common, the Thing it self rare. The Truth is, there is scarce Virtue enough left in the World to support it, for without Virtue Friendship cannot possibly subsist, nor has it any Place but among the Good^d. A thousand Frailties, Follies, Passions, Contrarities of Temper, Inclinations, Interests, and an unaccountable Inconstancy, either prevent or break, or at least cool and discompose it. And yet a little Ingenuity on the one hand, in owning our own Infirmities and Failings, and a little good Nature on the other, in overlooking and pardoning theirs, would heal all these petty Differences and Misunderstandings, cool those Heats, and soften and sweeten all those sharp and sour Humours which are caused by them. But as the Case now stands, our own narrow Thoughts, silly Humours, and

^c Nihil est enim tam Naturæ aptum, tam conveniens ad Res tam secundas quàm adversas—— Nam & secundas Res splendidiore facit Amicitia, & adversas partiens communicansque leviores. *Cicero de Amicitia*.

^d Nec sine virtute Amicitia esse ullo pacto potest—— Nisi in bonis Amicitiam esse non posse. *Cicero ibid.*

selfish Views, seem entirely to engross our whole Hearts, and to leave no room even for the most amiable Qualities, or the most valuable Virtues, of another. This is indeed a fair Plant, but it is apt to wither and die, or at best to look sickly, in an earthly Climate, and must perhaps be transplanted into an heavenly Soil, before it can arrive at its full Beauty and Perfection: It is however worth our Care and Culture, and tho' it cannot (amidst our Follies, Humours, and the present Circumstances of human Life) make us perfectly happy, yet the more, in all proper Instances, we cherish and improve it, the nearer Happiness we shall be continually approaching*.

BUT there is one Thing more, and still more valuable†, and that is *Knowledge* or *Wisdom*. In this the Wise, the wisest of Men, have ever placed Happiness, and by their own Confessions, have found that in Retirement among Books, which they had in vain sought after in the World among Men. This indeed promiseth fairest, (for *Wisdom excelleth Folly, as far as Light excelleth Darkness*) perhaps of all the Vanities under the Sun is the least, and has this peculiar Recommendation, that it preserves us (both as it employs our Time, and improves our Minds) from a thousand Follies and Indiscretions, and is on many Accounts our best Guard against Vice. So that tho' it cannot make us happy, yet it keeps us from making our selves

Eccles. ii. 13.

* EGO vos hortari tantum possum, ut Amicitiam omnibus Rebus humanis anteponatis. Cicero de Amicit. V.

† Qua (sc. Amicitia) quidem haud scio, an excepta sapientiâ quicquam melius Homini sit à Diis Immortalibus datum, ibid. VI.

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miserable. And if with *Solomon* we understand by it *Religion*, (which alone is *true Wisdom*) we have what we are seeking, *Fearing God and keeping his Commandments being the whole Happiness * of Man.* Eccles. xii. 13. But in any other Sense it too will fail us: As our Knowledge increaseth, Doubts, and consequently Disquiets, will be increasing with it, and we shall be painfully sensible how little, after all, we are capable of really knowing. We shall but mark Folly, Pride, Insincerity, and Ill-nature, with a quicker Eye, feel Misfortune and Misery in a more exquisite Manner, and grow more unhappy in Proportion as Wisdom teaches us to fear the more, and hope the less. And if we give our *Hearts to seek and search out by Wisdom, concerning all Things that are done under Heaven*, we shall find this to be a *sore Travel* which God hath given to the Sons of Eccles. i. 3. Men, to be exercised therewith. And whosoever undertaketh it, will experience to his Cost, that in much *Wisdom is much Grief*, and he that increaseth ch. i. 18. Knowledge increaseth Sorrow: Of which it is not perhaps the least Part, that he can scarce get a good Understanding, before he hath got a *bad Constitution*. However, the Pleasure arising from it here, is sometimes so ravishing, as to give us a Foretaste of what it will do for us hereafter, when we shall have got Bodies glorified, Souls

* In the Original, it is the *Whole* of Man: Our Translators have added *Duty*, piously enough; but not so agreeably to the Context. *Solomon's* Enquiry is after *Happiness*, and having sought it to no Purpose in *Knowledge, Riches and Pleasure*, he concludes that it is to be found in Religion alone: That to *fear God and keep his Commandments* is the whole *Happiness* of Man. This makes the Book and the Conclusion from it of a Piece.

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enlarged, better Senses, better Understandings, better Objects, an higher Station, a clearer Medium, and a freer Prospect.

AND if we had Leisure, even but thus transitorily, to inspect every other Circumstance and Condition of Life, we should soon be convinced, that there is some bitter Ingredient in each, and that constant Desire of Change, which we cannot but observe in almost all, is a sensible and unanswerable Argument, that there is no compleat Felicity to be found in any. *Solomon* is a standing Evidence and Example handed down to all Ages, that none, no, nor all of these, are capable of making us happy, *for what can the Man do that cometh after the King?* He had as great Opportunities as any can have after him, and he left no Experiment, no Method, untried; *he with-held not his Heart from any Joy.* And yet *Vanity of Vanities*, saith the Preacher, *all is Vanity*, nay, more, *Vexation of Spirit.* And what makes this Sentence the more unexceptionable is, that the Person who passed it, (had of all Men, whoever lived,) an unrival'd Superiority in the Fineness of his Taste, and the Justness of his Judgment: *He was one who had gotten more Wisdom than all they who had been before him in Jerusalem: Yea, his Heart had great Experience of Wisdom and Knowledge.* And we yet find Men daily, however inconsistently with their Practice, complaining that *Wealth, Power, Popularity, Pleasure*, (and O that the present State of Things was perfect enough to except *Friendship and Knowledge!*) were never able to balance half the Toils and Anxieties they undergo in the Pursuit

Eccles. ii. 12.

ch. ii. 10.

ch. i. 2.

ch. ii. 11.

ch. i. 16.

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suit and Possession of them. And if Happiness is not to be found in these, in vain shall we seek it elsewhere among the Things on Earth. The Misfortune and the Wonder is, that tho' the World promises Felicity, and then deceives us Day after Day, yet by a sort of Witchcraft we go on to believe it, and after a thousand Cheats put upon us, suffer our selves to be as easily deluded as at first. And tho' it has convinced us over and over, that it *cannot* it self make us happy, yet it continues still in Credit and Power enough with us to divert us from those Things which *would*. And by this fatal Mistake we are continually pursuing Happiness, without ever being able to come up with it: It seems ever near us, and yet is for ever out of our Reach. The Reason is, we seek it in Ways where it is not to be found; from Objects which have it not to give; or not in the Manner we ought. It was this vain Pursuit after Happiness here, which put one considerable Sect of the antient Philosophers upon placing their *chief Good* in *Indolence* or *Tranquillity*, in an *Absence* of *Desires*, an *Admiration* of *Nothing*. An *Ease* and *Equality* of Mind, which they asserted to be above all other *Pleasure*. They saw plainly that little, if any thing, more was to be attained in *this Life*. Their Error was, they stopped short, and sought it not, where it was only to be found, in *the next*.

HITHER therefore let us repair to seek it. Let us leave this Earth, a Climate, as you see, too barren for Happiness to grow in. And as our Ca-

* The Stoicks.

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capacities are plainly above every Thing in it; let our Views and Expectations be so too. Since there is Nothing in it worth our Thoughts and Affections, let us look out for Objects more deserving elsewhere. We must have little and narrow Souls to be so pleased here, as to think of and desire nothing farther, there being nothing here to satisfy a great or generous Mind.—Heaven is a noble Aim, and worthy of our Ambition, let us at least be Adventurers for it. And having taken a cursory View of Things below, let us endeavour to raise our Thoughts to those above, and, so far as we are at present able, examine whether these do not yield fairer Hopes, and a more promising Prospect.

Jam. i. 17.

Psa. xvi. 11.
Mat. v. 6.

AND the first remarkable Advantage which offers it self in favour of these, is, that they are free from that Uncertainty and Inconstancy, that Vanity and Emptiness, which we so much complain of in all worldly Enjoyments. *In Heaven is no Variableness* in any Sense, *neither Shadow of Turning*. The Scriptures express the Happiness of that State by *Fulness of Joy*, and by our being *filled* with it; intimating thereby, that there will not then, as now, be an *Empty Void*, left aching and unsatisfied in the Mind, but that the Pleasures arising from the Possession of these good Things will be every way perfect and compleat, and delight and ravish us through all the Powers and Faculties of our Souls. If at any time they are compared to a *Feast*, a *Banquet*, or a *Marriage Supper*, this is plainly in Compliance with our Weakness, those being Things we are apt to delight in. The Case is the

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the same even when they are represented as a *Treasure*, a *Crown*, a *Kingdom*: It being the peculiar and distinguishing Excellency of them, that they can neither be conceived or expressed by any Thing we know. Let it suffice, that they are an *exceed-² Cor. iv. 17.* *ing and eternal Weight of Glory*, with which nothing in this present World is worthy to be compared.

BUT to be more particular. We are told, that we shall not only have vast Perfections bestowed upon us, both with Regard to Soul and Body, but that then we shall be in the more immediate Presence of God; *shall see Him as He is, not through¹ John iii. 2.* *a Glass darkly, but Face to Face.* And not only *1 Cor. xiii. 12.* *see Him, but be like Him, Partakers* (as St. Peter *2 Pet. i. 4.* *speaks*) *of the Divine Nature.* Now tho' it be impossible for us at present to comprehend that Happiness, or those Perfections, which He enjoys in Himself, or what Degrees of them He communicates to the several Orders of Beings; yet as we know, that whatever is excellent or happy must be in Him without Limitation, so it is reasonable, as well as pious, to believe, they are diffused in some extraordinary Measures and Proportions to all those who are admitted to be *before His Throne*, and continually to *behold His Face.* As God is the Author of all the Good, the Original of all the Excellency, the infinite Fountain of all the Felicity which is in the Creatures, or enjoyed by them; so we cannot but imagine, that it must be a most transcendent Delight to be in His Presence, and to *see Him*, who is all Beauty and all Perfection, *as He is.* To speak of these Things in the only
C Language,

1 Kings 1. 3.

ver. 7, 8.

ver. 5.

ver. 5.

Language, to illustrate them in the only Manner, we are capable of here: If the Queen of *Sheba*, upon communing with him of all that was in her Heart, and upon seeing the *House that he had built*, could not but say to Solomon, *Thy Wisdom and Prosperity exceedeth the Fame which I heard; Happy are thy Men, happy are these thy Servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy Wisdom*: If, I say, it be such an exquisite Pleasure to a sensible Mind to enjoy the Company and Conversation of a Fellow-Creature, a Man like our selves, when God has been pleased to communicate only some little more than an ordinary Degree of Wisdom to him, as that we cannot help envying his very Servants the happy Opportunity of attending him: How infinitely greater must it needs be to behold the Grandeur of this Celestial Court, and to stand before this King of Kings! In comparison of whose immense Wisdom, that of Solomon was but *as a Drop of the Bucket*, or one Grain of Sand when compared with the Universe. Whatever be in Scripture meant by the *Face* or *Presence* of God, by His *Throne*, by the *Third Heaven*, by *Paradise*, the *Habitation of His Glory*, and the like; no doubt, when it is first vouchsafed us, to behold the Majesty of this Supreme Monarch, and to view the Splendors of His heavenly Palace, its Magnificence, *the Number of His Servants, and the Attendance of His Ministers*, and feel the inconceivable Raptures of beholding and standing continually before Him, we shall be transported with such Delight and Amazement, that, like her, we shall have *no more Spirit* left in

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Ver. 7.

us ; And confess, *that we believed not the Words, until we came, and our Eyes had seen them, and behold not the Half of them had been told us. —*

And it must wonderfully add to all the Glories and Raptures of this divine Vision to see *Christ* (as my Text informs us) *sitting on the right-hand of God*, that merciful Saviour ; who lived a Life of Poverty and Contempt, and died a Death of Pain and Ignominy, to make Way for our Reception, and purchase a free Passage for us to *the Riches of the* Eph. i. 18.

Glory of this Inheritance among the Saints. Who first carried our Nature thither, and enabled and exalted *this Corruptible to put on Incorruption, and* 1 Cor. xv. 53

this Mortal to put on Immortality. To see Him there *the Head of all Principality and Power*, in- 1 Coloss. ii. 10

throned with the Father, cloathed with Glory, and invested in Majesty for ever. How must the Sight of our Heavenly Father, our gracious Creator and Preserver, and of His beloved Son, our dearest Friend and kindest Benefactor, fill us with the warmest Sentiments of Love and Gratitude, till *Contempla-*

tion awakens into *Devotion* ; till the *Fire kindles*, Psa. xxxix. 4
and at last we speak with our Tongue ; break forth into everlasting Hymns and Songs of Praise to Him who sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever Rev. v. 13.
and ever.

THESE Raptures flowing from the *Beatific* Vision of God, will be strangely heighten'd, by observing how we our selves shall be thereby transform'd into the Divine Similitude ! How from *with open Face beholding, as in a Glass, the Glory of the* 2 Cor. iii. 18
Lord, we shall be changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory ! i. e. from one Degree of it to another.

ther. And what greater Brightness and Bliss can we wish, or conceive, than to be made like to Him, who is all Excellency, all Happiness? And besides the bare Lustre of it, there will arise an additional Pleasure from this Resemblance. Likeness naturally creates Affection and Desire, so that the nearer we approach to the Nature of God, the more intensely we shall love, and the more transcendent Ecstasy we shall receive from the Presence and Enjoyment of Him. And as we shall be pleased and transported in beholding and admiring his Perfections both Natural and Moral, so shall we likewise in seeing our selves so fair and lovely a *Copy* of this divine *Original*. This ^h *Plato* expresses by our *Union* with God, and seems to have been wonderfully charmed and delighted with the *Idea* of it.

AND among many other Advantages, in a great Measure unknown here, this will undoubtedly be one; that our Understandings will be vastly enlighten'd and enlarg'd, beyond what at present we are ~~not~~ able to imagine. As yet we see the Perfections of the Divine Nature but very dimly and imperfectly: Tho' we are certain there is a God, yet

Psa. xcvi. 2. *Clouds and Darkneſs are round about Him*, so that we cannot always trace the Footsteps of his Wisdom, or fathom the Depths and Designs of his Providence here below. It has been a Complaint in all Ages, that the Kingdom of Sin and Satan prevails: That the Wicked prosper, while Piety and Virtue

^h — Ut ipsa se Mens agnoscat, conjunctamque cum divina Mente se sentiat, ex quo insatiabili Gaudio compleatur. *Cicero. Tus. Disput. V. c. 25.*

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languish under Oppression: That Craft and Treachery gain their Ends of Simplicity and Honesty: That Merit is overlook'd, Innocence aspers'd, and powerful Villany escapes unpunish'd: And here we know not well what to make of these Things. The Weak stumble and are offended, so as to be tempted, in an unguarded or trying Hour, to fancy that the World is not govern'd as becomes infinite Justice and Wisdom. They begin, with *David*, to doubt whether it be not *in vain to cleanse* their *Hearts*, and *to wash their Hands in Innocency?* *Psa. lxxiii. 13.* And are ready to ask, where is that Just and Gracious God who should protect his Servants, and be *a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him?* *And Heb. xi. 6.* even the Wise and Good, who are convinc'd that all will appear right at last, that God will *be justified* in his Proceedings, and *be found clear when he is judged*, yet own they are lost and bewilder'd in the Maze of Providence at present; that their Understandings endeavour in vain to trace out these seeming Irregularities and Disorders; and find more Reason than they could wish, to cry out with *St. Paul*, *how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!* *Rom. xi. 33.*

BUT when we are once got into the Regions of Light and Bliss; all these Mists and Clouds, which at present so dim and intercept our Sight, will be immediately dispers'd; and we shall see clearly through all those mysterious Ways and Windings of Providence, which so puzzled and perplexed our Thoughts, and conquered and con-

³ *Estis ubi, O Superi! Sil. Ital.*

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founded our Reasonings in this World; and be unspeakably pleas'd in admiring and adoring his infinite Wisdom in them all. Particularly, in observing by what imperceptible Steps, and through what unseen Snares, his Care guided us safe! In what critical Moments he watch'd over us for Good! Shielded us from Sin, from Satan, and from our Selves! For what merciful Ends he sent Judgments upon us! And by what various Methods, both of Love and Correction, he conducted us to Glory! How many Times perhaps we have murmur'd at our Circumstances and Condition of Life here, tho' these were (as we shall then be abundantly convinc'd) the fittest and safest for us; and which, it may be, a wise and good God knew would be the best, if not the only, Means of bringing us to His Kingdom. If Sickness and Affliction be our Lot, we frequently repine; if Poverty our Portion, we are generally uneasy, and fondly fancy either that we did not deserve, or at least, that in Mercy God might have spared these Stripes; that we could have been as faithful to Him without them; and have found our Way to Heaven, as well from a *Land that floweth with Milk and Honey*, as from a *barren and desolate Wilderness*. And yet perhaps His Wisdom saw these proper, and even necessary, to render the Operations of His Grace effectual; or these transient Evils might be graciously intended to cure, and in some measure to atone for, the less and less observ'd Failings even of those who are most virtuous. And when this Life is at an end, all that we call Pain or Misery here, will then vanish like the *Morning Cloud, or early Dew*; seem

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seem like a Dream when one awaketh; and pass away as the Remembrance of a Guest that tarrieth but a Day. And then with what Gratitude must we contemplate His Goodness, and with what Rapture celebrate His Praise, who has been thus wisely and severely kind to us, as to make us happy contrary to our own Judgments, and in some measure against our Wills, by leading us through such Paths, as, because a little unpleasant to us, we should never of our selves have chose to walk in; but have travell'd on in those broader and smother Ways which lead to Destruction! To see fully and clearly that, what we now consider as Misfortunes and Disappointments, were in reality no other than so many Escapes and Blessings, must fill our whole Hearts with the most grateful Affections toward this watchful Guide and Guardian of all our Steps.

AND now I am speaking concerning the Improvements of our Knowledge in a glorified State, and of those Objects which it will probably be conversant about, I might add the whole Creation of God, and that Power and Wisdom by which it was at first made, and has been ever since preserv'd and govern'd, together with the Natures and Qualities of all the Creatures, either of those which fall under our Observation, and about which we now so much both *please* and puzzle our selves in long and laborious Searches; or of those who are more remote, and concerning which we can frame only some *plausible*, or at best, *probable Conjectures*. Part of which are *Angels, Arch-Angels, Cherubims, Seraphims, Principalities, Powers, Thrones and Dominions*: Names and Titles we meet with in *Scripture*;

ture; but of which we understand at present little more than the bare Sound. Perhaps these are different Ranks and Orders of intelligent Natures, which rising gradually one above another, in the *Scale of Beings*, fill up that infinite Distance betwixt an human Soul and its Creator; and, with relation to the Parts above us, compleat *the Harmony of the Universe*; and may vastly exceed the *Stars of Heaven*, or the *Sands upon the Sea-shore for Multitude*: But of whose Powers and Properties, Excellencies or Employments, we are now as ignorant, as the meanest Insect concerning the Nature or State of Man. It must be pleasant to have new and surprizing Scenes of Wonder and Admiration continually opening upon us: Thoroughly to understand what we call the Laws of Nature: To be let into the Secrets of the Universe; and to be acquainted with the hidden Springs and Wheels, those invisible Inclinations and Attractions, whereby the minutest Parts of it are connected, moved, sustained: To comprehend the different Magnitudes and Distances, the Ends and Uses, the Relations, Periods, Beauty and Proportions of those Orbs, which seem to us scatter'd and dispers'd without any regular Order, or the least Footsteps of Wisdom and Design: To mark the Dependance of the Parts of each System, or of the various Systems, one upon another: To visit with the Swiftneſs of Thought, or Lightning, far-distant Worlds; to learn how they are fitted up and furnish'd, and by whom inhabited. It must be still more pleasant to trace this Earth; Man, its chief Inhabitant; and his great Enemy, the Devil, with his Companions
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and Accomplices, from first to last, through the several Events, Revolutions, and Stages of their Being : To know all they have been, and all they will be for ever. To these we may add a perfect Insight into that *Mystery of Godliness, God was manifested in the Flesh.* A Piece of Knowledge, which not only of all others the most nearly concerns us ; but is in it self of so excellent and sublime a Nature, that *the Angels* themselves are said to *desire to look into it.* And tho' these Wonders of God's Kingdom will not, probably, be reveal'd to us all at once, nor to all in the same Measure and Proportion, but according to the different Degrees of our Industry and Improvement here ; yet so much will be communicated to every one, as his Capacity and other Circumstances will admit, and as to make him satisfied and happy : and such Knowledge as this must be a perpetual Spring of Pleasure. God's Nature, Perfections, Works of Creation, Providence, and Redemption alone, are Subjects for Contemplation never to be exhausted ; and the more and more we consider them, we may be making fresh Discoveries, and these attended with a fresh Pleasure to all Eternity ; it being plainly the Nature of Knowledge, as it increaseth, to grow still more delightful.

TO this Enlargement of our Knowledge, we may add a suitable Improvement of all the other Faculties, Powers, and Perfections of our Souls, particularly of our Love of God, of Virtue, and of all good Beings. Here, alas ! a thousand Vanities divert our Thoughts, and steal our Affections from Him ; but there the clear Vision and Enjoy-

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1 John iv. 8.

ment of his infinite Excellencies will engross our whole Hearts ; we shall then delight our selves in no other Object in Comparison of Him ; have no other Pleasure but to do his Will with the same Readiness, Chearfulness, and Ardency of Affection, with which the *Angels* do now in *Heaven*. And this will by no means be the smallest Part of our Felicity there ; for the *Height of Happiness* is nothing but *Love, Divine Love* ; and *God*, the happiest of all Beings, is *Love* it self, and infinitely the most deserving Object of it.

Heb. xii. 23.

AND then as to our Affections to one another. Here we meet with numberless Occasions of Strifes and Divisions. Interest separateth *chief Friends* ; Religion divides those it was design'd to unite ; groundless Fears make us often suspect the Innocent ; and unjust Jealousies cool to those we ought most to love : and a thousand other little Accidents break that good Understanding and mutual Confidence, which in a great measure constitute the Comfort of Life. And yet amidst the present Heats and Competitions of the World, these are, more or less, hardly to be avoided. *But when we are come, once come, unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to the general Assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect*, i. e. freed from every Folly and Frailty, from all Peevishness and Frowardness of Temper, and from whatever else may offend : where there will be no Passion but that of Love ; no Strife but that of pleasing God ; no Contention but that of obliging one
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another: where there will be no Clashings of Interest; our Faith and Religion free from all that *Dust* and *Dispute* which weak or designing Men raise about it here: where there will be no perverse Humours to disturb, no artful Disguises to deceive, no false Distrusts and Surmises, no little and selfish Ends, to divide and distract us. What a blessed State this! and what infinite Delight must a candid and good-natur'd Soul take in such transporting Society and Conversation! A Society made up of all the shining Lights of Antiquity; of Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors; of all the *Wise* and *Good* we have ever known, heard, or read of, and admir'd here. If the Charms arising from a free and full Communication of Thoughts, from mutual Confidence and Concern, and from a generous Exchange of good Offices, vastly surpass those of all other Kinds, even amidst our present Imperfections; how high and ravishing must they be in such a select Company, which were the Honour and Happiness of their respective Ages and Countries, the Glory and Praise of all Times and Places! The very meeting and mingling together of such an Assembly, must needs produce a Pleasure inexpressible; and one cannot think of it, without crying out, with one of the Ornaments of the *Heathen* World, *O glorious Day, when I shall go hence into that divine Council and Company of Souls*^k! What ingenuous Conversations, what sublime Speculations, what noble Discove-

^k O præclarum Diem, cum ad illud divinum Animorum concilium cœtumque proficiscar. *Cicero de Senectute.*

Rev. vii. 14.

Rev. v. 9.

ries, what refined Arts of Endearment and Friendship may not be expected there! And if, beside their Love to each other, we suppose them joining, at stated Times, in Praises and Hallelujahs to God, and to the Lamb, who *washed them in his Blood, and redeemed them out of every Kindred and Tongue, and People and Nation.* Imagination cannot form an Idea of any thing more heavenly and more happy. Amidst this *Family or Household of God*, we may probably see many of our most intimate and dearest Friends; and their Happiness cannot sure but vastly increase our own: nay, we may perhaps meet with some who were formerly our Enemies, but are now all Benevolence and Kindness; for Enmity and Hatred can find no Admittance into these Regions of Love and Bliss; and learn, to our unspeakable Joy, that our Prayers here for their Repentance and Pardon, had prevail'd with God to forget and forgive their Offences against us.

Heb. xi. 10.

Rev. xxi. 4.

BUT I must be hastning to another Province. Give me Leave, however, just to observe, that would the Time permit me to proceed, and was I able to describe, fully to describe to you this *heavenly Jerusalem; this City, which hath the Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God; this Kingdom of Truth, Virtue, and Happiness; where all Tears shall be wiped away from our Eyes; where there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain.* And, what is still more desirable, no longer either Sin or Temptation, *for the former Things are passed away; where we shall be before the Throne of God, and serve Him Day and Night; and he that sitteth*

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*on the Throne shall dwell among us ; where we shall
hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither
shall the Sun light on us, nor any Heat. For the* Rev. vii. 15,
Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed 16, 17.
us, and shall lead us unto living Fountains of Waters.

In a word, where we shall be as perfect and happy both in Body and Soul, as our Acquisitions and Attainments in Virtue here, and the Dispositions and Capacities we carry hence, will permit, and that for ever. Nay, could I but set before you, as it deserves, the unspeakable Felicity of being a Part and Partaker of this blessed Society, happy in the more immediate Presence and Enjoyment of God, of Christ, of Myriads of those glorious Creatures the Angels, and of the Saints and Worthies of all Ages ; *where we shall know even as we are known* ; and where there will be such a perfect Harmony of Thoughts and Affections ; so much of those pleasing Passions (if I may so call them) of Love, Benevolence and Gratitude, and Objects every way so worthy of them ; could I do this, surely I need use no further Persuasion, I think it would be impossible for you not to set your Affections on these Things, or to desire any thing more than an Inheritance among these Saints, where *Bliss and Glory, Truth and Knowledge, Love and Charity*, shall never fail. — And having done with the Text,

I COME now to pay the last Office of *Friendship and Respect*, I might say, of *Truth and Justice*, to the Memory of the valuable and excellent Person, whose Loss all we who knew Her, have but

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too just Reason to regret. In my own Judgment, indeed, I have ever been averse to *Funeral Commendations*, and this is the first I ever hazarded: They are of no real Service to the Dead, and when unjustly, immoderately, or even indiscreetly and injudiciously bestow'd, have a manifest ill Influence on the Living. And we of the Clergy should at all Times, and perhaps more particularly in these Days, be, above all Things, careful not to prostitute our Praises, and thereby bring ourselves and Order into Contempt.

BUT yet where a Character for Goodness is indisputable; where those who hear us can bear Witness to the Truth of what we say, can bear Witness that what we say falls short of Truth, there we may with Safety to our selves, and without Offence to others; nay, in some Cases, it may be our Duty; the declining and drooping Interests of Piety and Religion, (as requiring all the Helps we can give them) may demand it from us, to let
 Matt. v. 16. *the good Works of those who depart hence in the Lord shine before Men, that they may see them, glorify God for them, and themselves learn to go and do likewise.*
 Luke vi. 10. *God for them, and themselves learn to go and do likewise.*

AND since I must speak of Her, (for I cannot either deny it to my own Heart, to do what Justice I can to her Merit, nor would I willingly let slip such an Opportunity of recommending so fair an Example to your Imitation) I shall speak of Her first, as is natural, in that Capacity in which I knew Her best, and wherein I most sensibly feel her Loss, viz. in that of Friendship. And in this Relation, there was one Virtue, of which She
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was Mistress in a high Degree, and on the Account of which, I cannot help wishing She had been more generally known when living; because I think, now She is dead, we may almost say of it, as was formerly said of *Justice*, that it has *forsaken the Earth, and is fled to Heaven*: The Virtue I mean, is *Sincerity*. Not but that I hope, and believe, there are here and there to be found yet remaining, not a few Instances of this unfashionable Quality, who may be looked upon as the *Salt of the Earth*, and as design'd by Providence to keep it from Corruption: But yet, God knows! valuable as this Virtue is in it self; yet it is render'd much more so, by its being rare and uncommon. It was the Observation of an eloquent and excellent Prelate¹ of our Church some Years ago, (and, I fear, the Case has been growing worse ever since)

“ That it was just Matter of Complaint, that Sincerity and Plainness were out of Fashion; that our Language was running into a Lie; that Men had almost quite perverted the Use of Speech, and made Words to signify nothing; that the greatest Part of the Conversation of Mankind, and their Intercourse with one another, was little else but driving a Trade of Dissimulation, insomuch that it would make a Man heartily sick, and weary of the World, to see the little Sincerity that is in Use and Practice among Men, and tempt him to break out into that melancholy Complaint and Wish of the Prophet [*Jerem. ix.*] *O that I had in the Wilderness a Lodging-place of*

¹ Archbishop Tillotson. See his Sermon on *Sincerity*.

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" way-faring Men, that I might leave my People, and
 " go from them ! For they are all Adulterers, and an
 " Assembly of treacherous Men, and they bend their
 " Tongues, like their Bow, for Lies, but have no Cou-
 " rage for the Truth upon Earth. Take ye heed every
 " one of your Neighbours, and trust ye not in any Bro-
 " ther ; for every Brother will utterly supplant, and
 " every Neighbour will walk with Slanders. Thine
 " Habitation is in the midst of Deceit, one speaketh
 " peaceably to his Neighbour, but in his Heart he
 " lieth in wait. Shall I not visit for these Things,
 " saith the Lord ? and shall not my Soul be avenged
 " of such a Nation as this ?"

AGAINST all such Meanness, the worthy
 Object of our present Concern had, I think, a
 double Guard ; the natural Goodness of her Un-
 derstanding, and what is still a stronger one, the
 Uprightness of her Heart ; I say, a natural good
 Understanding ; for all Insincerity is a certain Sign
 of a narrow and shallow Capacity, of a little and
 low Mind. Solomon emphatically stiles *Deceit* the
 Prov. xiv. 8. *Folly of Fools* ; such a Piece of *Folly*, as a Man of
 sound and solid Sense cannot possibly be guilty of :
 And the great Foolishness of it appears particular-
 ly in this, that while they fancy themselves mighty
 wise, and too cunning to be found out, they are
 seen through, and secretly despised by all who
 know them^m.

^m Agreeably hereto, a great Genius and Philosopher of our own,
 (the Lord Verulam) remarks, " That the ablest Men that ever were,
 " have had all an Openness and Frankness of Dealing, and a Name
 " of Certainty and Veracity." See his Essay on Simulation and Dis-
 simulation.

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HER Behaviour to those with whom She conversed, was free from all false Appearances, artful Disguises, and little Frauds; it was easy and open. Her Kindness in the Reception of you, was not unlike that of a near Relation, and had something in it infinitely more taking than all the studied Art, all the affected Civility and Politeness in the World. Where She had a real Value Her self, there She was, and there only, desirous of being esteem'd; and as She could not but be sensible She deservedly was so, if She valued Her self upon any thing, it was on being so; this being but natural to a Mind so tender, so full of Sense and Sincerity, as Hers was. As She was happy in the most even and constant Temper I ever knew, and as She did not hastily enter into an Intimacy, the Person who was once Her Friend, was sure always of being so, unless by their own Fault. And tho' She had something so sweet in Her Disposition, and so very engaging in her Manner, that She would, in a single Visit, go a great way toward gaining your good Opinion; yet what confirm'd and secur'd it to Her, was to find that all was sound and sincere; that there were no false Colours or Pretences hung out, but that the *Law* Prov. xxxi. 26. *of Kindness*, which dwelt on her *Tongue*, flowed from her *Heart*. As her Judgment of Persons and Things was very just, her Opinion (where it could be had) was of an inestimable Value, as one might depend upon its being free from every undue Influence; and She would weigh and consider a Friend's Case, just as if it had been Her own. This right Turn of Mind and Sentiments, made

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it easy to converse with Her: She was so far from expecting, that She, from her Heart, despised all those extravagant Compliments, those idle and foolish Speeches, which Vanity and Insincerity have rendered almost a necessary Part of Civility and good Manners to those of her Sex, of any Fashion in the World. There was one particular Piece of Baseness and Cruelty She abhorred, and that was, any Endeavour towards sinking a worthy and weighty Character, by dark Hints, or little and dubious Insinuations; or by picking out and heightning, and then ridiculing, any innocent and unavoidable Unhappiness or Misfortune in it. — And tho' an honest Scorn and Detestation of every thing that was mean or vicious was, on all Occasions, eminently remarkable in Her; yet the Unhappy, even by their own Folly and Fault, where the Circumstances would admit of it, were sure of her Compassion. In these She would pity, generously pity their want of Education, and proper Opportunities of learning to know themselves, and what Decency and Duty demanded of them, better. This Integrity of Behaviour is so charming (I am sure it was so in Her) that one knows not how to take one's Leave of it; one would set it, would the Time permit, in all possible Lights, that it might appear to all possible Advantage, the better to recommend it self to our Choice. Nor let any then think this a Matter of small Moment, which, if duly practis'd, would make Mankind so happy in one another.

I WILL not say, but the Opinion which I had conceiv'd of Her, might make me sometimes partial

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rial in her Favour, (and a laudable Partiality this to the Deserving!) but in such an Hour, and such a Light as I have been describing, I have thought I have had before me that fair Picture of *Virtue*, which a noble *Heathen*ⁿ tells us, *could we but see without Eyes, would raise in us a wonderful Affection and Admiration of it.* In a word, this Sincerity in all we say and do, is a Disposition so amiable and excellent, that *David* makes it a necessary Qualification of an Inhabitant of *Sion*, that he should *speak the Truth from his Heart, that he bath used no Deceit in his Tongue, and bath not slandered his Neighbour*: and elsewhere pronounceth him *Blessed, in whose Spirit there is no Guile.* And it is worthy Notice, that the highest Character and fullest Commendation, that our Blessed Saviour ever bestow'd upon any particular Person, was on *Nathaniel*, and that upon account of his Sincerity; pointing him out at the same time as a kind of Wonder or Curiosity: *Behold, says he, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no Guile!*

Psal. xv. 2, 3.

xxxii. 2.

John i. 47.

AND if She was thus valuable as a *Friend*, what an inestimable Jewel must She have been as a *Wife*! She was, I think in that relation, all that Heart could wish; at once the most agreeable Companion, and most faithful Partaker in every Joy and every Sorrow. Sorrow, did I say? I believe if we except Sicknefs, and those unavoidable Accidents, which the very Condition of Living exposes all in common to, they scarce knew any.

ⁿ — Formam quidem ipsam — & tanquam faciem *Honesti* vides; quæ si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles Amores (ut ait *Plato*) excitaret, &c. *Cicero de Officiis*, l. 5.

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Their mutual Desire to oblige each other, and the Pleasure they took in it, like a perpetual Sunshine, dispersed every approaching Cloud, and one eternal Spring of Peace and Good-nature cherish'd and enliven'd even the most indifferent Actions, and rais'd them far above common Life. Her whole Carriage and Conversation bespoke Her pure and spotless, even in Thought; and She pass'd as uncensur'd and unblemish'd through the World as Her Virtue deserv'd. She was in Fact, what *Cæsar* is reported to have said his Wife ought to be, *Not only free from Fault, but from the least Shadow or Suspicion of it* °.

EQUALLY perfect was She as a *Daughter*; and indeed She kept up the Duties of Love and Honour to her Father (her only surviving Parent after I knew Her) in the highest and tenderest Manner I ever observ'd: One of the most sensible Pleasures of her Life was writing to, and hearing from that Father; a Pleasure which She never long wanted. He had been careful to *train* Her up, when young, in the *Way* She *should* go, and when grown up, She neither forgot him nor it. An useful Lesson to Parents, to sow the Seeds of Piety and Duty in the Minds of their Children early, if they expect the happy Fruits or Comfort of them afterwards.

AND, indeed, as no one ever deserv'd a tender and affectionate Husband and Parent better; so no Wife or Daughter was ever happier in those Relations of

° Interrogatusque cur igitur repudiasset Uxorem; quoniam, inquit, Meos tam *suspicionem* quam *Crimine* iudicio carere oportere. *Suetonius Jul. Cæs.* c. lxxiv.

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Life. She had the good Fortune to have her Worth known and priz'd, and to meet with just and full Returns of Regard and Affection.

AND if any thing here below could have justified the setting our Hearts upon it, it must have been a *Friend*, a *Wife*, a *Daughter* like *Her*; and yet her Death has convinc'd us all, (particularly Him who had the chief Interest in Her, and who, in having so, was lately the happiest of Men) of the Vanity of doing this: And he is just like a Merchant, who had laid out all his Treasures in one Pearl of great Price, and of which, by a fatal Shipwrack, he has lately suffer'd the Loss.

TO these I might add Her universal Benevolence to all in general, her Regard and Tenderness to her Neighbours and Servants, and her Charity and Compassion to the poor in particular. I might enlarge on that Heavenly-mindedness, that Love and Affection for *Things above*, which has been the Subject of the present Discourse; but the Time will not permit, and I hasten to the chief Branch of it, to what our Blessed Saviour calls the *first and great Commandment*, and what is Matt. xxii. 38. at once the Ground and Foundation, the Crown and Commendation of whatever Excellency we are capable of attaining, *viz.* Her *Love* of and *Piety* to God. — And She was so exact and constant in her Devotion, that She could justly have applied her self to God in the Words of the *Psalmist*; *In the Evening and Morning, and at Noon-day, will I pray, and that instantly.* Psa. lv. 18. The Sun rose, came to his height, and set, not more certainly and regularly than She prayed; for, though

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though She was bless'd with Plenty, and happy in what are, though very improperly called the Goods of Fortune; yet She was convinc'd, that Nothing (no, nor every Thing) in this World, was capable of making Her happy. She was sensible, that in Him She *lived and moved, and had her Being*; that on Him She depended every Moment, not only for the Conveniencies and Comforts of Life, but for Life it self. And as her Lot had *fallen in a fair Ground, and She had a goodly Heritage*, She had a deep Sense of God's Bounty towards Her; and, knowing that the best of us are not worthy of *the least of His Mercies*, as She was in all Respects of a grateful Temper; so here She was remarkably so, and would take a particular Pleasure in *praising the Lord for His Goodness*.

AAs xvii. 28.

Psa. xvi. 7.

Gen. xxxii. 10.

Psa. cvii. 21.

AND, in order to serve Him acceptably, She did not, like the *Heathen* Idolaters of old, or like the *Natural Religion or Moral* Men in our Days, first make a God to her Mind, and then worship Him just as might suit her Humour or Fancy; but She sought His Will in His Word, with this happy Qualification, to find it; that She had no Will of Her own, no Will but His. And in order to this blessed End, She was not only a conscientious Attendant in His House, and very observant of what She heard from the Pulpit; but She was likewise at Home a constant and careful Reader of the Bible; and had such a thorough Comprehension of the State and Condition of Mankind, from first to last; of their original Innocence and Rectitude; of their Fall; of that gra-

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cious Method God had taken for their Recovery; of the Fitness and Wisdom of it; of the warm Returns of Thankfulness and Honour due from Christians for it; and even of some of the more difficult Passages of Scripture, as is not commonly to be met with in one of her Sex: And it was impossible to entertain Her better, to render your Conversation more agreeable to Her, or indeed to lay a greater Obligation upon Her, than to clear up any Part of the *Wisdom of God*, in this great *Mystery*; any thing relating to a future State, or the Happiness of Blessed Souls there, which She did not so perfectly understand before; and She is now gone to taste and experience the happy Privilege contain'd in that favourite Passage of Hers, after the Meaning of which She was so inquisitive, and with the probable Interpretation of which She was so delighted here, wherein Christ promiseth, that to *Him* or *Her that overcometh*, *He will give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the Paradise of God*. Rev. xi. 17.

I have quoted this Verse as it stands in the *Alex.* and several other MSS. in the most antient *Versions*, and in *Arethas* and *Cyprian*. The Words omitted were probably a Comment from *Gen. iii. 3.* at first written in the Margin, and afterwards taken into the Text. The Sense of them, here alluded to, is this, That as the Tree of Life in Paradise was by Man's free Admission to it, either *naturally*, or by a *Divine supernatural* Virtue, to have preserved him immortal, and upon his forfeiting Immortality, he was of course banished from it; so upon his Entrance into Paradise after Death, he is represented as admitted to it again, to signify, that having undergone the Punishment of *Adam's* Transgression, the Curse of the Fall is no longer to rest upon him, but that he is from henceforth restored to that *Life* and *Immortality*, of which this Tree was not only a *Sign*, but a *Support*, and consequently to the eternal Fruition of all that Happiness and Glory for which he was originally designed.

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And after all her Care, (so tender was her Conscience, and of such infinite Importance was the Thing to Her! that) She would sometimes be a little apprehensive, lest she should not have formed her Faith aright; and when She was confirmed and comforted in this respect, you might discover the Joy of her Heart very visibly in her Face. As She had been early taught, and her Mind strongly tinctur'd with a Sense of Religion and Devotion, I think the Warmth of it was kept up in her Breast, like an eternal Flame, without ever once expiring. It might, and indeed will even in the best, be at sometimes warmer and brighter than at others. And indeed as She lived, so She died; pouring out her Soul to God in that excellent Collect of our Church, for the seventh *Sunday* after *Trinity*, which was, I suppose, one of Her select Prayers.

THIS Temper, or rather Habit of Devotion, and of Regard to God's Will and Commands, made Her glad of all Opportunities to receive the Sacrament, as a Testimony of the Sense She had of the inestimable Benefit of Christ's Death, and of her Gratitude to that Saviour, who had done and suffer'd so much for Her; and it was an astonishing Thing to Her, that there should be Men who could overlook such an amazing Instance of Love and Kindness. And in *Her* last Sickness, tho' She was not apprehensive of Danger, yet She intended, had She lived one Day longer, to have partook of this holy Communion, giving this remarkable Reason for so doing, that She had once omitted it, upon being obliged to take a sudden Journey,

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Journey, which She seemed to charge Her self with as a Fault or Neglect, of which She was desirous to ease *her* Conscience. Blessed Circumstance! for ever to be, shall I say, admir'd, or envied? That such a casual Omission, upon the Review of her Life, should be the highest Crime She had to accuse Her self of. — From all which it appears, that the Principles of Piety to God, and Sincerity to Man, were in Her like Seeds sown in a rich and happy Soil, they grew up, and brought forth Fruit to Perfection. As She had receiv'd them in *an honest and good Heart*, She suffered neither the *wicked One to come and* Luke viii. 15. *take away that which was sown*, nor the *Cares of* Mark iv. 19. *this World, or the Deceitfulness of Riches, or the Lusts of other Things, to enter in and choke them, so as to become unfruitful.*

THUS good, thus happy was She! and, indeed, considering how just her Notions of Happiness were, it could hardly be otherwise: She placed it first (where it ever ought to be first plac'd) in the Favour and Approbation of God; in a sincere Endeavour to live so as to be entitled to that *Blessedness* mention'd by the *Psalmist*, of having our former *Unrighteousnesses forgiven*, our Psa. xxxii. 1, 2. *Transgressions covered*; and our present smaller *Sins of Infirmary and daily IncurSION, not imputed unto us*: She look'd upon a *Conscience void of Offence* Acts xxiv. 16. *toward God, and toward Men*, as the Foundation of all true Tranquillity and Felicity: She plac'd it next in the Love and Affection of her Husband, Parent, and other Relations, and acquitting Her self worthily in every Part of Life which properly

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perly belonged to Her. To these She would add the Company and Conversation of a Friend, in whose Virtue and Sincerity She could think Her self safe. In forming and fixing these Sentiments of Happiness, Retirement and Reading had been of great Service to Her; and She had at last so low an Opinion of every thing besides, that if She was forced for some time, either by Civility or Business, into the more general Conversation, or something like what is called the *Gaiety* of Life, She was soon sick of the Folly and Trifling, Vanity and Insincerity, Malice and Ill-nature, She could not but observe in it, and was always glad when She had escaped from it.

MUCH more might, much more ought to be said of this incomparable Woman: But we must be forced, how unwillingly soever, to take our Leave. I must, however, be so just both to Her and to my self, as to observe, that I am far from thinking this a full and perfect Picture of Her. — No! 'tis but a faint and distant Likeness, — a favourite Feature or two, imperfectly copied by one who knew Her well, had been happy in her Friendship, and who, from the sincere Affection and Esteem he bore Her, was desirous to shew his Respect, little concern'd that he was at the same time shewing his own Weakness, and how unfit he was for the Task he had undertaken. Though any Attempt, how imperfect soever, to recommend Virtue, by doing what Justice we are able to those who deserved well, must, with the *Candid* and the *Good*, carry with it no small Excuse and Alleviation. And somebody

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body or other has remark'd, in a like Case, *That when Life is gone, a Picture drawn even by an unskilful Hand, will have its Use and Value with those who loved, what it doth however, unequally represent.*

THUS excellent, her Loss was, no doubt, great; and yet what made it more sensibly felt was, its being sudden and unlook'd for: for though She had been sick, She was thought in no Danger; and her Death at last was so easy and gentle, that as long as She could speak, (and She was speechless but a few Minutes) She was Her self not sensible of any; as appears from this remarkable Expression which dropped from Her: "*Was I dying, surely Nature would tell me so.*" Her Body free from any violent Pains or Convulsions, her Mind calm and serene: She had this best of Cordials to comfort Her, and She blessed God for it, that She had not then her *Peace* to make. God, in Kindness to Her, had placed a Guard of good Angels round Her, which would not suffer the Enemy to approach Her, or disturb her last Moments: but yet when those we love and value are, *in the Twinkling of an Eye*, thus unexpectedly snatch'd from us, though their Departure be attended with all these favourable Circumstances; yet even then, sudden Surprizes of this kind, which touch us nearly, almost insensibly betray our Weakness into Expostulations with Providence; and we can scarce help saying, with the Prophet, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when we plead with thee, yet let us talk with thee of thy Judgments.* Give us Leave at least, with due Humility

military to enquire, why are the best taken first? Why are they taken when they can least be spar'd? When the Cause of Religion and Virtue stands in most need of such faithful Succours and Supports? Do these purer Spirits fly off by their native Excellency, as we see in other things the finest Particles separate themselves from their grosser Dregs, and make their Escape first? Are they too good for this World, ripe for Heaven, and are they *taken away*, in Mercy to them, from *the Evil to come*? Or are they removed in Anger to us, and because we were unworthy of their longer Continuance amongst us? These Depths of Providence we are not able to fathom at present; but the Reasons and Wisdom of them we shall one Day see, and be thoroughly satisfied in. In the mean time let us, with the *Psalmist*, be *dumb*, and *open not our Mouths*: or, if we must speak, yet still let us submit, and say with old Eli, *It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good*; and confess, that however unequal and severe his Dispensations may seem, *yet that great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints.*

1 Sam. iii. 18.

Rev. xv. 3.

Philip. i. 21.

Rev. ii. 10.

THUS remarkably happy was She in Life and Death! Happy, where Happiness alone is to be found, in the Favour of God; and tho' *Death, without doubt, is to her Gain*; yet we cannot but wish, for our own sakes, that we had been happy in the longer Enjoyment of Her. However, be this our Comfort, that She lived and died good; that by being *faithful unto Death*, She hath secured (the only way by which it can be secured) *a Crown of Life*;

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Life; that while living She was blessed in Plenty, blessed in Relations, blessed in Friends, and blessed in the general good Opinion, the Love and Esteem of all who knew Her; and now She is dead, hath left behind Her a Name, which will embalm her Memory, preserve it sweeter and fresher than the richest, the most precious Ointments, the most costly or fragrant Spices. — And since all our Care and Caution, all our Love and Kindness, could not keep Her; since She is now no longer ours, but *her Life*, in the Language of my Text, *is hid with Christ in God*; it is but common Prudence, and a due Regard to our selves, to take care that She should not leave us Grief and Anguish only, when She has so well done her Part, to leave us so winning an Example of *whatsoever* Philip. iv. 8. *Things are true, of whatsoever Things are honest, of whatsoever Things are just, of whatsoever Things are pure, of whatsoever Things are lovely, of whatsoever Things are of good Report.* If therefore there be any Virtue left amongst us, or if there be any Praise yet remaining for what is Praiseworthy; if we have any Regard for Her, or any for our selves, *let us think on, and imitate these Things.*

HER *Life* is, indeed (as the Apostle speaks) *hid with Christ in God.* But for Her, and for our Comfort, we know that *when Christ, who is her* Coloss. iii. 4. *Life, shall appear, then shall She also appear with Him in Glory*; as She left this World upon the same Day on which He *ascended up to Heaven*^a. She is,

^a She died on *Ascension-Day*: which Circumstance was the Reason of preaching on this Text. The Design to prevail with us to ascend likewise in *Heart and Mind*, with Her, to *seek those Things which are above.*

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without dispute, happy; unspeakably happy at present, and in full Expectation and Assurance of being still more so at the last Day, when that Body, which we are now committing to the Grave, with all the Marks of Respect and Honour in our Power, shall rise again to meet its departed Companion, that She may receive her *perfect Consummation and Bliss, both in Body and Soul*. Till which blessed Union, a *decent and secure Repository*^r is provided for that Body, till the last Trump shall summon it to Judgment. And tho' I am sensible it can never in the least avail Her; on Supposition that any Concern of this Nature in the Living could possibly avail the Dead, I think She would want it as little as almost any ever did; yet, out of pure Tenderneſs, I cannot forbear this last Farewel, this friendly, but fruitless Wish for Her, tho' departed, in the Words of St. Paul for Onesimus, then probably living, 2 Tim. i. 18. *The Lord grant unto her that she may find Mercy of the Lord in that Day!*

*Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
be all Honour, Praise, and Glory, henceforth,
and for evermore. Amen.*

^r A new Vault made in the Chancel upon this Occasion.

F I N I S.



The Author's Distance from the Press preventing his Attendance, it is hoped any Slip or Error will be candidly overlook'd.